



SOUTH FOUR CORNERS

Citizens Association



Building a stronger community, one neighbor at a time

May/June 2018

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

May 21, 2018 – 7pm

SFCCA Community Meeting
Schweinhaut Senior Center

May 26, 2018 – 10am

Clean-up of Forest Glen Rd
(meet at Argyle Park tennis courts)

Jun 16, 2018 – 8:30pm

Neighborhood
Outdoor Movie!
(see page 7)

**New
Event!**

Jul 16, 2018 – 7pm

SFCCA Community Meeting
Schweinhaut Senior Center

Jul 21, 2018 – 10am

Clean-up of Forest Glen Rd
(meet at Argyle Park tennis courts)

Aug 7, 2018

National Night Out

Next SFCCA Meeting

Monday, May 21 at 7pm

Schweinhaut Senior Center 1000 Forest Glen Road

Featured Guest Speaker:

Reemberto Rodriguez
"Mr. Silver Spring"



Please join us as we welcome **Reemberto Rodriguez, Director of the Silver Spring Regional Center**, to our upcoming community meeting. The Center's main purpose is to strengthen communication and provide liaison between local neighborhoods and businesses within the region and the various agencies of Montgomery County government. By identifying and assessing regional problems and issues, one goal of the Regional Center is to bring a community perspective to major policy issues facing County decision makers.

Appointed by the Montgomery County Executive, Mr. Rodriguez serves County officials as their "eyes and ears" in the Silver Spring community. A secondary responsibility of his is to promote a sense of community through the sponsorship of and participation in special community events.

Mr. Rodriguez became Director of the Regional Center nearly eight years ago after a long career in community organizing, leadership development, community design, urban planning, and teaching at the graduate level. He holds masters' degrees in architecture and community development.

Our meeting with Mr. Rodriguez is a great opportunity for residents from our neighborhood to learn about what the latest trends and developments are in our corner of the County, as well as to request that action be taken on the issues that are most important to us here in South Four Corners.

We hope to see you there for what we expect to be a productive dialogue at the Schweinhaut Senior Center on May 21 at 7:00 PM! Please remember, **SFCCA meetings now end promptly at 8:30 pm.**

* SFCCA meetings are held bi-monthly on the third Monday of January, March, May, July, September, and November at Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Rd. When the third Monday of the month falls on a federal holiday, the meeting is postponed, space permitting, to the following day.

President's Corner

Dear Neighbors,

With our taxes paid, the school year in the home stretch, and summer on the horizon, it's hard to believe we're nearing the year's midpoint already. Since I began my first term as SFCCA President, nearly two years have passed in the blink of an eye. The cyclical tasks of writing newsletters, inviting speakers, and leading community meetings have gotten easier. And, paradoxically, my connection to our community has grown stronger despite the truth that most of us have never met. Why is that?

For me, I think it has something to do with belonging. While it sometimes feels strange to work on our collective behalf without knowing each of you, my intention to be of service is what guides my way and makes me feel like I belong. And, what makes it more fun is working behind the scenes with volunteers who are equally committed to building community. The truth is, if you live in South Four Corners, you already belong. So why not get involved and really make a

difference for all of us. Here are some things to consider:

- Become an SFCCA officer – Annual elections are held at our May meeting and we really need a Secretary! See page 6 for more information.
- Help plan our bi-annual Community Day – See Earl Shoop's article on page 8.
- Express yourself by writing an article for the newsletter – Contact Jane Jannotta at SFCCA.Editor@gmail.com
- Join an existing committee or create and lead a new one – Contact me!

I remain grateful to each and every one of you for ***“building a stronger community, one neighbor at a time.”*** So don't be a stranger. Let's be in touch.

Carolyn Stanek Lucy

SFCCA.President@gmail.com
(202) 251-6403

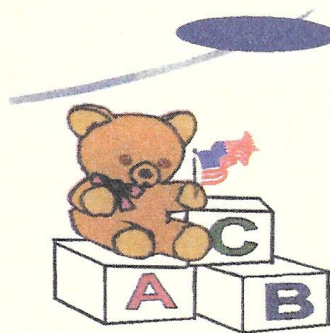


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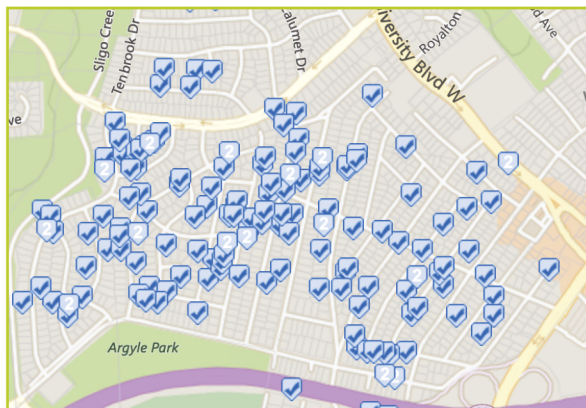
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Advocacy

BE AN INFORMED VOTER

By Laurence Dickter

While some of you may already be anticipating this fall's general election for control of both houses of the U. S. Congress, an election of potentially great consequence, **elections for all Maryland State and Montgomery County offices** are also being held this year. Primary election day is **June 26**, with early voting taking place from **June 14-21**. The general election will be held on November 6.

Most Montgomery County voters know who the U. S. President is. Some may be able to name at least one of their two U. S. Senators. Fewer still may know who serves on their behalf in the U. S. House of Representatives. And it is a rare voter who can identify those who (one Senator, three Delegates) represent their district in the Maryland state legislature, let alone those who serve them on the County Council—even though they may have voted for most, if not all of them, and on multiple occasions.

Moreover, many citizens admit they vote for candidates solely because they have “seen his/her name before” or because the candidate showed up at an event the citizen attended, not because of any knowledge of the candidate's public policy positions or, in the case of an incumbent, the candidate's voting record.

Voters being unable to identify their elected officials is one thing; however, it is far more telling that many, if not most voters do not know where the candidates they just voted for stand on the issues. Is it any wonder then that 95% of incumbents are routinely re-elected and that voters often experience “buyer's remorse” over their choices?

As a long-time local political activist who has been involved in numerous Montgomery County election

campaigns, as well as having talked to hundreds (thousands?) of voters over the past quarter century, I can confirm all of the above.

In 2014, the last non-Presidential election year, just 16.2 percent of Montgomery County's 630,000 eligible voters cast ballots in that year's primary election, the lowest voter turnout of any Maryland county

We all know what is coming in the weeks ahead when our mailboxes will be filled to overflowing with literature from the candidates, almost all singing from the same hymnal. At this moment, I am looking at two recent “lit pieces” that just arrived in my mailbox. One candidate is telling me “She's running to get things done,” while another is promising to “implement the best ideas to move Montgomery County forward”. And it will be a rare candidate who doesn't promise to “grow the economy”—whatever that means. Fortunately for the candidates, few specifics are required.

In 2014, the last non-Presidential election year, just 16.2 percent of Montgomery County's 630,000 eligible voters cast ballots in that year's primary election, the lowest voter turnout of any Maryland county, and even worse than turnout four years earlier. Not to diminish his narrow, hard fought victory, it should be noted that our current District 5 representative on the Montgomery County Council was elected by roughly 8% of the voters eligible to cast ballots in that year's

Democratic primary (he was unopposed in the general election).

I believe there are a number of reasons for such an alarming decline in voter participation:

First, and perhaps foremost, is the collapse of trust in our nation's institutions and an accompanying erosion of confidence in government at all levels, with Montgomery County, where there is a widely felt disconnect between its citizens and their elected officials, being no exception.

When citizens no longer feel that representative government is operating in a transparent and responsive manner, and that special interests and large campaign donors (particularly developers) are driving the agenda at the expense of the public interest, they become disillusioned and cynical and, in one of the greatest threats to democracy itself, begin disengaging from “the process” altogether.

Just 18 months ago, in what has been widely interpreted as a vote of “no confidence” in the County's elected leadership, seven out of ten County voters ratified an amendment to the Montgomery County Charter limiting the number of terms that the County Executive and all nine County Councilmembers can serve. Shortly after one Councilmember dismissively called term limits a “stupid idea,” nearly 300,000 “stupid” voters responded by approving term limits.

Secondly, voters stop voting when they are so disillusioned that they believe their vote “won't make a difference” or that it “doesn't count”. (As for the latter, tell that to Al Gore who lost the Presidency in 2000 by 537 votes in Florida out of almost six million votes cast in that state; or, more recently, tell that to the two candidates for state

delegate in Virginia whose election literally ended in a tie vote, with the eventual winner's name being drawn from a ceramic bowl). Even more so this year in Montgomery County, with such an excessive number of candidates running for so many offices, it appears likely that more than a few races may be decided around the margins, some even by a handful of votes.

Most of the leading candidates for Montgomery County Council support zoning changes that could radically and irreparably transform Four Corners by allowing developers to build apartments within a ¼ mile radius of Bus Rapid Transit stations

Another factor in the decline of voter participation and engagement may be the demise of local media outlets, and the relative inattention to Montgomery County by the D.C.-centric Washington Post. In such a media environment, it is extremely difficult for a challenger to get his or her message out to the public, even when he or she may offer a stark contrast to an incumbent. In what has been called a “media desert,” highly opinionated and/or partisan bloggers, who are not bound to any journalistic norms, have moved in to fill the vacuum left by more traditional media.

Unfortunately, many voters lack a basic awareness of what the County Council does and why it is important who they elect to serve on it. I have talked to more than a few voters who say the issue they care most about is the County's unsustainable pace of growth and the failure to require developers to pay their fair share of the infrastructure needed to support their projects (roads, schools, police and fire protection, etc.),

costs that would otherwise be borne by County taxpayers. However, when I ask these same voters who they voted for to serve on the County Council (which makes all development-related decisions), they often say they voted for and intend to continue supporting candidates who hold views on growth and development that are diametrically opposed to their own views, something which they are totally unaware of.

Here in Four Corners, the residential character and diversity of our neighborhoods, which are currently zoned **single family residential (R-60)**, and our enviable quality of life are constantly under threat. However, once the newly elected County Council takes office in December, a new and unprecedented threat may be introduced sometime thereafter.

The reason is that **most, if not all**, of the leading candidates for Montgomery County Council, incumbents and challengers alike, have stated their support for zoning changes that could radically and irreparably transform Four Corners for the worse. This would be accomplished by allowing developers to build hundreds of apartment units (with severely limited parking) within a ¼ mile radius of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stations, including those proposed for Four Corners and Burnt Mills. Once the area within that radius is rezoned for the hyper development that is envisioned, then almost anything goes—all in the name of “smart growth”.

(One supporter of this scheme once advocated replacing our Safeway grocery store, whose location in Four Corners makes it that much easier for our neighbors to “age in place,” with a Busboys and Poets lounge).

Think what that would mean for traffic congestion, school overcrowding, and parking for residents here in Four Corners. And once Four Corners and Burnt Mills just up the road become targets for “redevelopment,” it may only be a matter of time before our cherished small businesses and community institutions like Carlo Santucci Deli,

The 4 Corners Pub, the Akhmedova Ballet Academy, the Arcade Barber Shop, Blue Heron Wellness, and others are forced out, just as “redevelopment” has killed untold numbers of small businesses in communities throughout Montgomery County.

Do you know which candidates favor such a radical transformation of Four Corners and its surrounding neighborhoods? Would it affect your vote one way or the other if you knew who they are?

With the Internet today, anyone can investigate almost any candidates' positions (though often stated in broad generalities and feel-good bromides) and/or voting record on the issues. Attend a candidates' forum, like the one Four Corners' civic associations (including SFCCA) held recently. Pick up a League of Women Voters Voter's Guide. If you subscribe to cable television, tune in to the County's cable channels to see if they are running interviews with the candidates this year.

Better yet, call or send emails to the candidates you want to question. Many of them have an “events” tab on their web site listing their campaign appearances, many of which take place before small groups and are open to the general public. You can go ask questions of the candidate, up close and personal, often times one-on-one.

At the same time so much of our attention is focused on national affairs and “breaking news” out of Washington, critical decisions are being made by our elected officials in Rockville. These decisions frequently and very directly affect our day-to-day lives, the livability of our neighborhoods and the desirability of Montgomery County as a place to call home. In this election year, it is up to you, the informed voters of Montgomery County, to learn all you can about the candidates before you vote—especially if you believe, as the late Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill was fond of saying, that “all politics are local”. ■



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SFCCA Yahoo Group Listserv:

www.groups.yahoo.com/group/SFCCAMembers

Facebook: www.facebook.com/southfourcorners/

Election of Officers



The annual election of SFCCA officers is held at the May meeting. Members will nominate and elect the next President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary to serve the community until May 2019. Any member in good standing is eligible to

serve. Nomination of officers may be made from the floor while the May meeting is in progress.

Please join us and vote at the upcoming meeting!

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Seasonal

PROTECT YOUR FAMILY AND PETS FROM TOXIC PEST-CONTROL CHEMICALS

By John Holden

Environmental experts and government officials are concerned by the growing popularity of pesticides used by private pest control companies to try to control mosquitoes and ticks. They note that these treatments expose people and pets to toxic chemicals, and they are particularly concerned due to health risks for kids, from asthma attacks to long-term learning and reproductive problems.

Two of the ingredients used by Mosquito Squad, one of many private pest control companies that has recently seen a boom in business, are bifenthrin and cyfluthrin. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency labels bifenthrin as a possible human carcinogen, and is currently reviewing both chemicals due to suspicions that they could cause allergic reactions and disrupt the endocrine system, says John Wargo, an environmental health professor at Yale University. The latter chemical is of particular concern to Wargo. Chemicals that mimic human hormones can scramble the body's natural signals, potentially leading to developmental disorders, sexual problems and obesity, among other health issues, he said. Recent research suggests harmful effects could even result from tiny doses. "This is especially worrisome for pregnant women and young children during rapid periods of

growth and development," said Wargo, highlighting the danger of the persistence and reapplication of the pesticides in people's yards. The undisclosed ingredients that are added to help Mosquito Squad's pesticides stick to foliage could also be harmful to people's nervous and respiratory systems, Wargo said. (There are good reasons that the people spraying the chemicals wear hazardous materials suits.)



Critics also question whether pesticide sprays actually succeed in killing their intended targets, and whether they protect people from contracting bug-borne diseases. Biologists at Cornell University point out that targeting mosquitoes with

sprays only results in "temporary control" and "should only be considered as a last resort."

For non-toxic alternatives that are much less expensive, the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection provides a "**Checklist to Reduce Mosquito Breeding**":

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Mosquito/Resources/Files/Mosquito-Checklist.pdf>

The information above is based in part on a Huffington Post article updated in December 2017.

Upcoming Events

NEIGHBORHOOD OUTDOOR MOVIE!

Saturday, June 16 at 8:30pm

Join your neighbors for an outdoor movie and freshly popped popcorn as we welcome the summer season with *Star Wars: A New Hope*. Bring a blanket or chairs for viewing. **Costumes welcome!** We're still confirming which street and block will be our host, so stay tuned for updates on:

Listserv: www.groups.yahoo.com/groups/SFCCAMembers

Facebook: www.facebook.com/southfourcorners/

SFCCA website: www.southfourcorners.com

**New
Event!**



COMMUNITY DAY 2018

By Earl Shoop

As you may have seen on the listserv, I am seeking help to make **Community Day a day to remember!** This special event will take place at the Schweinhaut Community Center (date TBD). Since I have not experienced past Community Days, I'm asking people to share their memories, especially the ones that were **FUN**, to get an idea of the range of activities, food, music, etc. To get ideas flowing.... past events included a magic show, local music, a cake walk, arts and crafts, face painting, a cutest pet photo contest, plant sale, plenty of delicious food & drinks, and more!

Join me to truly make this a *community* event. I don't intend to allow anyone to be overloaded with work.



If lots of folks pitch in a little, we can do a lot!

To get involved, email me at eshoop@verizon.net
Please put "Community Day" in the subject line.

For additional information and ongoing updates, visit the South Four Corners website at:
<https://southfourcorners.com/community-day/>

Thank you!

Volunteers Needed



Make a Difference Close to Home!

SFCCA is looking for **talented people** who are inspired to make a difference in our community. **Mentors available!**

Secretary

The Secretary, an elected position, takes the minutes during bi-monthly SFCCA meetings, types them up, and submits them to the Newsletter Editor for the next issue. This position is available to any SFCCA member in good standing, meaning you've paid your annual \$15 dues.

Additionally, greater involvement, diversity, and leadership from new people are always welcome! You could **submit an article** for publication in the newsletter (as long as it's politically neutral, and doesn't promote a specific vendor). **Run for an officer position** in May. Become the **featured guest in the Open Doors** column, and so much more! The bottom line is SFCCA exists - or doesn't - because people take on roles to make it happen. While we have a structure with officers, committees, and members, our work is very self-generated with lots of room for creative expression.

Membership

Support our community by becoming a member of the **South Four Corners Citizens Association!** SFCCA is the voice of our residential community. Its vigorous advocacy and events make South Four Corners safer, more beautiful and more connected.

Join today! Only \$15 per year:

- Pay by cash/check at the upcoming SFCCA meeting
- Pay by check payable to SFCCA, send to:
SFC Membership PO Box 792
Silver Spring, MD 20918-0792
- Pay online using credit card or PayPal at <https://southfourcorners.com/membership>

For more information contact Eileen Broderick, Membership, at eileen@starpower.net

